

JUNE 6th ELECTION VOTING FAQS & INFORMATION

Early Voting & Absentee Ballots

Q: I received a postcard about Voting by mail. Is this from the Town? Do I have to respond to vote?

A: The postcard is from the Town Clerk's Office advising you of an option to vote by mail or drop-box given the COVID-19 Emergency. You do not have to respond if you already requested an Absentee or Early Voting ballot or if you plan to vote in-person.

Q: I requested an Absentee Ballot, but I don't meet the criteria listed on the affidavit with my ballot. Can I still vote with my Absentee Ballot?

A: Yes. Massachusetts passed a special law that allows you to submit an absentee ballot if you have any health concerns related to COVID-19. You only need to write "COVID-19" as your reason for Absentee Voting. Further Details can be found below on Absentee and "Early Voting"¹ by Mail.

Q: I requested an Early Voting Ballot, but received an Absentee Ballot instead. Can I use it?

A: Yes. "Early" Mail-in Voters can be issued either Absentee or Early Voting ballots for the purposes of this election because many municipalities do not have a sufficient number of Early Voting ballots available. For voter purposes, the Absentee and Early Voting ballots are interchangeable.

Q: I did not receive/lost/discarded my post card about Absentee/Early Voting. Can I still request a Ballot?

A: Yes. You may [download the 2020 Municipal Election Early Ballot Application](#) or you may write the Town Clerk's Office to request an Early Voting Ballot by letter, email, or fax, but you must include your name, address, address to send a ballot, *and a signature* in your request (signatures are required by the MA Secretary of State). A telephone number is also recommended. Be advised that you should submit your request with enough time for the Clerk's Office to mail a ballot to you before Election Day.

¹ While the term "Early Voting" is used on forms and ballots, for the purposes of this election only, it is essentially a mail-in ballot.

Q: What is the deadline for requesting Absentee or Early Voting ballots?

A: Requests must be *received* by the Town Clerk's Office by 12 p.m. (noon) on June 5th. Residents are *strongly encouraged* to return their postcards or make other requests for Absentee or Early Voting Ballots as soon as possible so we may mail a ballot to you.

Q: How will I receive my ballot on time if my request is not received until the day before the election?

A: The law requires the Clerk's Office to *accept* requests for ballots up to noon the day before the Election because absentee ballot applications could traditionally be sought and provided in-person in the Clerk's Office. For requests by mail, email, or fax, if received on June 5th *by noon* the Town Clerk's Office will mail your ballot the same day. The Town Clerk's Office is not required to, nor can it guarantee delivery of ballots in such a short timeframe so residents are strongly encouraged to make their requests as soon as possible.

Q: How can I return my Absentee or Early Voting Ballot?

A: Ballots can be returned by mail or hand-delivered by you or a family member into one of three secure brown voting "drop boxes" bearing the Town Seal pictured below and located at:

- East Arlington - Outside the Fox Branch Library; 175 Massachusetts Ave
- Arlington Center - In front of Town Hall (on the lower plaza)
- Arlington Heights - Outside ACMI Studios 85 Park Avenue



Ballots must be *received* by the close of the polls at 8:00 p.m. on June 6th. *A post-mark will not be sufficient to count your ballot.*

Q: If I requested an Early Voting or Absentee Ballot, can I still vote at the polls?

A: Yes, but only if your ballot was not already processed when you go to the polls. Absentee and Early Voting ballots begin being counted on Election Day.

*****Further Information on Absentee & Early Voting By Mail is Provided Below*****

Voting at the Polls

Q: Are the polling locations safe?

A: The polling locations are being made as safe as possible. Poll workers will be wearing personal protective equipment, stations will be shielded with plexiglass, and staff will be available to sanitize voting booths. Poll worker staff numbers have also been reduced as much as practically possible to limit the potential for COVID-19 transmission.

Voters will be directed to stay at least six (6) feet apart wherever possible both in line and while voting. Polling locations bathrooms will be limited to use by election workers and related staff only. Police details and Medical Reserve Corps volunteers will also be present to aid the efficient flow of voters and provide masks to voters who need them subject to supply constraints.

Voting is an absolute right. The Town respectfully requests all residents at the polls do their very best to work together and with election staff to register, cast ballots, and exit polling locations as efficiently as possible to best limit exposure to themselves and others. Please refrain from socializing at or around polling locations.

Q: Am I required to wear a mask or face covering to vote?

A: Masks or other face coverings are required in all places open to the public where persons do not or cannot stay six feet apart by Governor Baker's COVID-19 Order 31, and the accompanying Order of the Arlington Board of Health. Only persons who cannot wear masks due to a medical condition are exempt.

Masks are not however a pre-requisite to voting. Voters are advised that they could be subject to a fine under the State's Order for not wearing a mask, but will not be prohibited from voting. Town staff and/or Medical Reserve Corps volunteers will provide masks to voters who need them (and do not have a medical reasons for not wearing them) so long as supplies are available.

For those who are able please bring and wear masks out of respect for others in your community and our election workers helping to ensure that your vote is counted.

Q: Are the Polls open during usual times at their usual precinct locations?

A: Polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Most of polling locations remain the same, but Precincts 7, 9, and 20 have been moved for the purposes of this election. Please [check updated list of polling locations](#).

Election Day Campaign & Political Activity

Q: Are there any special restrictions on campaign and political activity during this election?

A: Campaign workers and others engaged in political activity are subject to the Governor's and the Board of Health's directives on wearing masks and face coverings. Otherwise, all residents are reminded that certain activities are prohibited within 150 feet of the polling place and/or inside the polls locations themselves as set forth in G.L. c. 54 sec. 65 and 950 CMR 54.04(22)(c) and (d) as would be the case in any election.

Q: Are observers permitted inside polling locations?

A: Yes. The law requires the Town permit observers in polling locations outside the guard rail, unless they are disorderly or obstruct the access of voters. If there are so many observers in the polling place that they obstruct voters, they may be asked to cooperate in collecting information. The Town respectfully asks that any observers comply with Warden instructions to aid social distancing and wear masks or face coverings while inside polling locations.

Further Information on Absentee and "Early Voting" By Mail Options Due to the COVID-19 Emergency

Given the risks associated with the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 illness ("COVID-19") the Commonwealth passed Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020, which among other things allows voters to participate in the *rescheduled 2020 Town Election only* without showing up physically at the polls.

First, voters will be considered eligible for absentee ballots under the category of "physical disability" if:

- You are ill;
- You are confined to your home because you may transmit COVID-19 infection; or
- You cannot leave your home because you are a member of a population vulnerable to illness; or

• You are staying in your home or avoiding your polling place as a precautionary measure in response to COVID-19. Writing "COVID-19" on the application and ballot documents will be considered sufficient for this election.

Second, any registered voter may vote by mail through mail-in "early voting," by sending a written request for an early voting ballot to the Town Clerk's Office by email, fax, or other writing.

Requesting Absentee Ballots

In addition to the post-card transmitted to all registered voters from the Town Clerk's Office to aid requests for ballots, applications for absentee ballots can be downloaded and printed here:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee/English-Absentee-Ballot-Application.pdf>

It is helpful if you use the post-card previously transmitted. You can however also request an absentee ballot by using this form or writing a letter to the Clerk's Office if you do not have a printer, but be sure to include your name, address, the election for which you are requesting a ballot and your signature.

Requesting "Early Voting" Ballots

Applications for "early voting" mail-in ballots can be downloaded and printed here:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/2020-Municipal-Early-Ballot-Application.pdf>

It is helpful if you use the post-card previously transmitted. You may however use this form, or submit a request in other forms, including email, fax, and letter including your name, address, election for which you are requesting a ballot, and your signature.

*****All requests should include a visible signature per the direction of the Secretary of State's Office*****

Receiving Your Ballots

Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 authorizes the Town Clerk's Office to send you an absentee ballot even if you have requested to vote by early mail-in voting.

Whether you apply for an absentee ballot or early voting ballot, you may receive an “absentee ballot” and an affidavit to complete, which will suffice for both forms of voting. Absentee voters need only write “COVID-19” as their reason for absentee voting.

Submitting your Ballots

All mail-in ballots – absentee and “early voting” mail-in ballots, must be *received* by the close of polls on the day of the election – *a postmark is not sufficient*. Absentee ballots may be mailed or hand-delivered by a family member to Town Hall (if an appropriate location for receiving deliveries can be provided). *Please be sure to allow enough time for the mailing of your application and your ballot.*

Already Submitted Absentee Ballots

Any Absentee Ballot already received for the 2020 Town Election is valid and will be counted. Voters who submitted absentee ballots can still vote in person, but only if their ballot has not already been processed.